DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 343 087 CS 010 858

AUTHOR Rafferty, Cathleen D.; And Others
TITLE Developing a Reading/Writing Curriculum for At-Risk High School Students.
PUB DATE Dec 91
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference (41st, Palm Springs, CA, December 3-7, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Development; *High Risk Students; High Schools; *High School Students; *Instructional Effectiveness; *Reading Instruction; *Remedial Instruction; Student Attitudes; Student Motivation; Whole Language Approach; *Writing Instruction

ABSTRACT

A study analyzed teacher and student perceptions of a literature-based reading/writing curriculum for at-risk high school students. Eighteen students, (3 girls, 15 boys) ranging in age from 15 to 18 years, began English 9, a redesigned one-semester literature-based make-up course for students who failed ninth-grade English. Prior to the study, the course consisted of repeating the same kind of instruction that resulted in student failure in the regular classroom. Eight students were interviewed mid-way through the second semester. Data also included field notes and interviews with teachers concerning courses taken after the students completed the make-up course. Results indicated that although students had been placed in English 9 for various reasons, almost all responded favorably to the redesigned curriculum, which used a literature-based reading/writing approach taught in a relaxed and democratic classroom atmosphere. Most English 9 students and their subsequent English teachers concurred that through these means, the students had acquired both the motivation and literacy skills necessary to succeed in the academic school environment. (Twenty-three references, profiles of the English 9 students, and interview protocols are attached.) (RS)

DEVELOPING A READING/WRITING CURRICULUM FOR AT-RISK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Cathleen D. Rafferty
Associate Professor - Secondary Education/Reading
TEPD Ronan 227
Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859

Pamela S. Klimenko
English/Drama/Communications Teacher
Holt High School
1784 Aurelius
Holt, MI 48842

Diane Holt-Reynolds
Assistant Professor - Teacher Education
201 Erickson Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824

Paper presented at the 41st annual meeting of
the National Reading Conference
Palm Springs, CA
December 3-7, 1991

DEVELOPING A READING/WRITING CURRICULUM FOR AT-RISK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Various reform agendas and initiatives continue to dot the educational landscape but many believe that increasing numbers of our students remain at-risk. The recent emergence of Professional Development Schools (Holmes Group, 1990) holds much promise for collaborative endeavors that seek solutions to such complex educational dilemmas. This paper documents how a teacher and a teacher educator in a Professional Development School (PDS) developed, refined, and evaluated a reading/writing curriculum for at-risk high school students partially retained in-grade.

Teacher research/action research has been an accepted practice in schools for a number of years. Recently it has been linked to restructuring and the change of practice (For example see: Goswami and Stillman, 1987; Lomax, 1989; Perrone, 1991.) Because PDS schools are designed to create variance in teaching and the study of teaching and learning (Duffy and Barnes, 1991), they are ripe locations for classroom inquiry. Action research has been described as an analytical, dialectical process through which teachers can understand their own practice (Lomax, 1989). Such research projects are the norm in Professional Development Schools and ultimately led to the inquiry described herein.

While general agreement on the value of classroom research seems possible, reaching consensus on the meaning of "at-risk" is more problematic. In fact, a recent synthesis of extant research on effective programs/practices for "at-risk" students (Slavin, et al., 1989) offered at least four viable definitions: 1) students who, on

DEVELOPING A READING/WRITING CURRICULUM FOR AT-RISK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

the basis of several risk factors are unlikely to graduate from high school; 2) students who are unlikely to leave school with an adequate level of basic skills; 3) students who are unlikely to pass criterion-referenced graduation tests; and 4) students who are presently eligible for special or compensatory education (p. 5).

These definitions refer to students of normal intelligence who have failed to achieve basic skills necessary for success in schooling and/or life. Because one or more characterize the subjects of our research (English 9 repeat students) our definition of at-risk is synonymous with the aforementioned descriptions.

Consensus about effective teaching behaviors and/or programs for at-risk students, especially at the upper grades, is even more elusive. However, we extrapolated teaching behaviors advocated for elementary educators of at-risk students: 1) Establish a highly structured, well-organized environment in which there is little transitional or noninstructional wait-time or student off-task behavior. 2) Provide positive feedback to students responding correctly and ask clarifying or helping followup questions if a second chance is necessary. 3) Provide instructional materials that will ensure success. 4) Create a supportive, nonthreatening classroom environment (Slavin, et al., 1989).

In addition to teacher behaviors most likely to ensure success for at-risk students, curricular considerations were also necessary. Because the subjects of this research had previously failed a traditional curriculum of grammar and literature concepts,

alternatives were explored. The success of Fader (et al., 1976) was an early indication of the power of a literature-based reading/writing approach with secondary students. More recently Atwell (1987) and others (See for example: Beach and Hynds, 1991; Commeytras, 1989; Farnan, 1989; Kreisberg, 1989; Smith and Bowers, 1989; Gambrell, 1990) have helped to reconceptualize English/Reading curricula. More and more it appears that those "who use literature based reading instruction to challenge the basal tradition [and hopefully other English/Reading traditions as well] boast stunning levels of success with all types of students and particularly with disabled and disinterested readers" (Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989, p. 470).

Although there is a growing knowledge/research base on at-risk students and various methodological and programmatic recommendations, we lack qualitative analyses of teacher and student perceptions of a literature-based reading/writing curriculum for at-risk high school students. This study provides such information about one program.

Method of Study

Research Questions

This study has two primary purposes: 1) to analyze and report data related to a PDS action research project and, 2) to provide an example of a collaborative endeavor that interfaces research paradigms with various activities that occur in a Professional Development School (i.e. Erickson, 1986; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990).

The overarching English 9 PDS Literacy Project question for 1990-91 was: "How do students who have failed one or more semesters of English 9 acquire the motivation and literacy skills to survive and in

fact succeed in the academic school environment, as well as develop appropriate social and interactive skills necessary to help them make connections into other regular classes and real-world/work situations?" Specific goals targeted: 1) developing a fluency in literacy through exposure to a lot of reading and writing, 2) valuing reading and writing as solutions to personal situations, 3) seeing reading and writing as enjoyable leisure activities, and 4) developing appropriate discussion, thinking, and problem solving techniques.

Participants

At the beginning of Fall 1990 the class contained eighteen students - three girls and fifteen boys ranging in age from fifteen to eighteen. One was a foreign exchange student, a senior, with very low English language skills. Three students were on a special education case load. Five students were seventeen or eighteen years old, trying to make up their English 9 required credit, in some cases even after they had completed higher grade level English classes. The rest were regular sophomores who, for various reasons, had failed English 9 at the junior high.

Attrition eventually reduced the class size. By mid-semester we were working with a total of fourteen students, eight of whom we were able to interview during the second semester.

Context

Traditionally, the English 9 class had been a one semester make-up class for students failing English 9 at the junior high. Its existence made it possible for students to move on to high school while allowing them to repeat this particular course. Previously, much of the work done in the repeat class was synonymous with the term

"repeat class" - a repeat of the same material, text, basic concepts of literature - probably even the same work sheets on parts of speech were used.

However, 1990-91 signaled significant changes. Although many of these techniques are probably familiar to teachers of "more skilled" students, too often students labeled as "less skilled" or "at-risk" receive more routinized, skills-based instruction (Allington, 1991). Anticipation guides laid the conceptual framework for novels. Oral reading, reader's theater, and silent reading were utilized, supplemented with reader-response think sheets to facilitate student understanding of literary devices and students' construction of meaning. Prior to paper-and-pencil tests, extension projects like posters, radio plays, newspaper articles, talk-shows, and rap songs further engaged students in meaningful literate activities.

Sustained silent reading of self-selected novels was another important aspect of the redesigned curriculum. We were delighted to discover that "at-risk" students would read when afforded the opportunity. A book report and related creative project culminated this component.

As preparation for the required sophomore research paper English 9 students were introduced to "I-Search." All students completed this project and at least four confirmed that it was the first report they had actually completed in years.

An additional significant factor was the class atmosphere. Rather than rigid and autocratic, it was more relaxed and democratic. It took a while for students to adjust and accept responsibility for

the kind of mutual respect necessary, but in time techniques like "fishbowl" discussion helped students to learn to appreciate each others' viewpoints.

Data Collection

Various data sources important to the study are described below.

Fieldnotes. As participant-observer the first author took elaborate fieldnotes several days per week throughout Fall semester 1990. In the ethnographic tradition fieldnotes were later reread, analyzed, pondered, and additional reflections and analytic memos were written. Often these memos served as grist for debriefing sessions.

Audio-recorded debriefings. During second semester, after English 9 students had moved on to their new courses, from time to time we scheduled a "reflective debriefing" session. The primary purpose of these sessions was to push our thinking about English 9 and to focus on areas to refine. These audio tapes were transcribed so that copies were available for future reference.

Interviews. There were two types of interviews, those with English 9 students and those with English 10 and Communication Skills teachers with whom students were placed during second semester of 1990-91 academic year. All were audio-recorded. Eight English 9 students were interviewed near the end of 1990-91 academic year as they completed their semester in English 10 or Communication Skills. Once students left English 9 after Fall semester they moved into various English 10 or Communication Skills courses second semester. We were curious to know teacher perceptions of the students' attitudes, behavior, work ethic, skill level, etc.

Other sources. Additional data sources included student work such as projects and exams, and feedback from a presentation of the English 9 PDS project to a group of reading professors at the host university.

Data Analysis

Student interviews were transcribed by a graduate student employed as a PDS documentor. The first author transcribed both the debriefing session tapes and teacher interview tapes. Initial analyses were conducted by all three authors, refined by the first author, and later verified again by the three of us.

English 9 student interviews and English 10/Communication Skills teacher interviews were primary data sources. From these sources themes and categories were developed. Four major coding categories emerged: perspectives held by subjects, activity codes, strategy codes, and relationships and social structure. Subgroups/subcodes developed within major categories. For example, embedded within "perspectives held by subjects" were three subcategories of reasons for failing English 9 at the junior high. Categorical data were then triangulated with observational fieldnotes, debriefing session notes, and sample student work.

Additional analyses were conducted after the emergence of relationships between reasons for initial English 9 failure and the overarching research question which addressed acquisition of motivation and literacy skills. During these analyses, relationships between recommended teaching behaviors for at-risk students and reasons for earlier English 9 failure were also identified. All are elaborated upon in the next section.

Although the researchers took an eclectic approach, this study is primarily qualitative in methodology (Erickson, 1986) and symbolic interactionist in framework (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). Grounded theory or the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) undergirded the analysis. Results presented herein also represent a case study approach because this collaborative inquiry is also "an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a process, an institution, or a social group" (Merriam, 1988, p. 9).

Description and Interpretation of Findings

Just as Slavin et al. (1989) offered numerous descriptions or definitions of "at-risk" students, reasons for failure in English 9 and subsequent student reactions to programmatic adjustments in the repeat course were just as diverse. With the exception of Kelli, all student cases presented herein had failed English 9 at the feeder junior high, but for various reasons. These are discussed in the first section, **Reasons for Repeating English 9**. During extended analyses, relationships between reasons for earlier failure and students' reactions to various teaching behaviors advocated for at-risk students also emerged. Section two, **Relationships - Repeat Reasons and Recommended At-Risk Teaching Behaviors**, presents these results. The principal English 9 research question involved how students acquire both motivation and literacy skills necessary to succeed in school. The final section, **Relationships - Repeat Reasons and Acquisition of Motivation and/or Literacy Skills**, suggests that regardless of reasons for earlier failure, most students were

successful, largely attributable to the English 9 curriculum in which both content and context were redesigned.

Reasons for Repeating English 9

Analysis of end-of-year student interviews revealed three categories of reasons for repeating English 9: 1) inability to get work in due to time constraints and/or lack of organization, 2) completing work but not doing well, or 3) deliberately not completing work.

Three students who evinced the lowest skill levels, Brandy, Kelli, and Jake reported that time and/or organization were problematic. Brandy explained that he "didn't have enough time..they weren't too hard...I just didn't finish them." For both Kelli and Jake, however, time and organization were the culprits. Kelli noted that, "All they had all the time was lots of paperwork and it was hard to keep up with all the paperwork...they gave you so much of it, it was hard to keep up." For Jake the frustration was that he "couldn't get the work in...it was due too soon for me and I'm late turning things in anyway but...or I got it done and I'd lose a lot of my papers."

Only one student specifically stated that he had not done well on work completed for class, or that he had tried and failed. For Sonny it seemed more an issue of quality than quantity.

For many of these students, however, time, organization, and quality were not key issues. Four deliberately chose not to do the work. Not surprisingly, these same four exhibited ability levels that were anything but remedial in nature. Micky freely admitted that he "didn't do any work...because I had better things to do...I thought

the assignments were dumb cause in all the English classes it's just grammar and stuff and you do that a couple of years in a row and it gets pretty monotonous." Short Stuff had a similar response. "I didn't put forth the effort I guess...and me and the teacher didn't...really like each other. [The assignments] weren't too hard...I just didn't feel like doing them because it was mostly the same stuff all the time." Lenny said he failed because he "didn't do his work." He sometimes handed in daily work or projects if he "felt like doing it." Primarily he "just didn't like the subjects" and thought that many assignments were "insignificant, and unimportant to our lives." Finally, Chip admitted that he "wasn't turning in everything...so [it was] the [final] report, pass or fail." He also claimed that because he didn't turn in the final report he failed English 9 "by four points."

It is also interesting to note that the English 10 and Communication Skills teachers who had these students during second semester 1990-91 were often surprised that they had been in the repeat English 9 class. When asked for possible reasons why these students had to repeat English 9 one responded that, "I don't feel these kids have any real major intelligence deficits or anything. I think there has been a series of things that traditionally affects these kinds of kids and their lives." A second was "very surprised that [Short Stuff] had to repeat English 9 because he really seems to be feeling confident." The third teacher declared, "I have no idea."

Relationships - Repeat Reasons and Recommended At-Risk Teaching Behaviors

All students interviewed basically expected the English 9 repeat class to characterize its label. Most were pleasantly surprised that it was structured differently. In an earlier section four characteristics of behaviors recommended for teachers of at-risk elementary students were extrapolated for upper-grades students. Observational notes from Fall 1990 document strong evidence of three of four of these characteristics having positive impact on English 9 students regardless of their previous reasons for failing. These characteristics were providing positive feedback, providing instructional materials that will ensure success, and creating a supportive, nonthreatening classroom environment (Slavin, et al., 1989).

Taken together, these three characteristics describe the context (both climate and instruction) in the English 9 classroom. Although there was not consensus from which particular assignments or activities students learned the most or why they were perceived as interesting or valuable, apparently the class offered something for the wide range of interest, motivational, and ability levels present. Meaningful assignments fell into three major categories: 1) novels and accompanying worksheets, 2) writing reports and scripts, and 3) various group projects/activities. Not surprisingly, the same project or assignment was often valued for different reasons.

The novels and accompanying worksheets routine was valued by Micky, Short Stuff, Kelli, and Lenny because the worksheets asked for "personal feelings and applications", "made me think," and "helped me remember." Kelli in particular commented that she "learned to read with feeling...and that made it sound more real." Writing reports was

cited as important by Brandy because he "hadn't done this in quite a long time." Various group projects like radio plays and scripts were cited by Sonny, Chip, and Jake primarily because they liked to work in groups and these particular activities "helped (them) to understand and remember better."

Of the four characteristics recommended as teaching behaviors for working with at-risk students, only one was not consistently evident in English 9: a highly structured, well-organized environment in which there is little transitional or non-instructional wait-time or student off-task behavior. This appeared to be the case for several interrelated reasons. Fall 1990 was the first attempt with the redesigned English 9 curriculum. Although several novels had been selected, not all were available at the beginning of the semester, resulting in delayed planning. In addition, this was also the first experience with a student teacher. For these reasons, it was difficult to support the student teacher as she organized and delivered instruction for approximately one month during the semester.

Although there was a marked difference between the amount of structure and organization between the student teacher and the teacher, neither one was autocratic or rigid. One might suspect that students who had previously struggled with time management and/or organizational skills (Brandy, Kelli, and Jake) would be negatively impacted by this lack of structure. This was not the case. In addition, those students who previously had purposely avoided doing English 9 work at the junior high because it lacked significance for them, commented favorably about the structure of the class because as Micky stated, "you've got all these people who have failed English for

various...reasons,...[and] the way you let us have a lot of freedom in there..., to kind of pick what we wanted to do and what we wanted to stay away from [helped too]." For those students who were already independent, absence of a restrictive environment was perceived as positive and rewarding because they felt they were treated as adults. In fact, student input often shaped the activities. If students questioned the importance of certain tasks and we couldn't defend our rationale, we would alter the plan. This helped students have ownership and feel important.

Relationships - Repeat Reasons and Acquisition of Motivation and/or Literacy Skills

The overarching English 9 research question was concerned with students acquiring motivation and literacy skills from the reconceptualized curriculum. With few exceptions, students expressed more positive attitudes toward English (and often school in general). Most also agreed that English 9 had prepared them for success in either English 10 or Communication Skills. The rest of this section will more precisely delineate relationships between reasons students repeated English 9 and improved motivation and the acquisition of literacy skills.

Motivation is a complex construct. However, it seems that if students are motivated to read, write, and complete assignments and projects, a more positive attitude toward a subject matter is implied. Regardless of reasons for earlier failure in English 9, students reported improved attitudes toward English (English class) for a variety of reasons. No precise categories emerged. Rather, improved motivation/attitude resulted from a combination of not only what was

done but how it was done. This combination of content and process yielded more success and self-esteem for some, a growing appreciation for reading for a few, and a reduction of resistive or rebellious tendencies in others.

As an example, Brandy reported that he thought the repeat English 9 would be "hard or boring" but that he had changed because he discovered that he "can (do it)...it's a lot easier for me now...I kinda got caught up thinking it was too hard for me." It seems that Brandy was indeed "caught up" in a self-fulfilling prophecy mode until successes helped him realize that the repeat English 9 work was "stuff that (he could) actually get done and feel good about."

Short Stuff commented that "before ninth grade I didn't really pick up a book and read it...now I'm picking up more books and reading them...now it's just like natural for me to pick up a book...I read now." When probed to describe why/how this change had occurred he responded that, "I was made to (read) in that class and it was a fun make. It wasn't a 'you do this and you do that,' it was like 'now we're going to do this' and it wasn't - it was an order - but it was a soft order, it wasn't a harsh order." Content (SSR) and process (classroom climate) were both influential in this development.

Lenny, who earlier had failed English 9 for deliberately not doing the work because it lacked significance for him, liked the reorganized English 9 curriculum "'cause we're treated more like adults than at the junior high." Upon further probing he elaborated that he didn't "like working out of books" but instead liked "doing more independent projects." For this student, both content and process accommodated individual learning style preferences.

Students' self-assessment of literacy skills followed a similar pattern. Regardless of reasons for repeating English 9, most students felt they had acquired requisite skills necessary for success in English 10. A grid was constructed to analyze content of various English 10 or Communication Skills classes as described during teacher interviews. When teacher descriptions were compared with student responses to the statement: "I think the English 9 class at HHS helped prepare me for further study in the English 10 class in the following ways:" we discovered that students were remarkably accurate in their perceptions of how English 9 had prepared them for their subsequent English classes. Depending on the class and the teacher, second semester assignments included: reading plays like "Romeo and Juliet" and "Our Town," reading adolescent novels with written responses/reactions, doing research projects, oral communication and demonstration speeches, and personal management skills.

As an example, Kelli described her preparation for Communication Skills as, "Reading and we got to write. We went over, we didn't go completely out of English, we did verbs and nouns and we got to read some different kinds of books and made posters and stuff." When asked to explain how that had prepared her for second semester she replied, "I was reading a lot more. And we [had] to read out loud and stuff and we learned how to use our voice in a classroom." Even Chip, who was quite resentful that he had to repeat because he only failed by four points, admitted that he "got prepared for reports and other things [he] got a grade on."

In addition, second semester English teachers were almost unanimous in their favorable reports on most of these students. Even

students who had previously struggled with time management and organization were being more responsible. The lone exception was Jake. His story, supported by data from his second semester teachers, is a powerful one that cannot be addressed in this context. It will be the focus of another paper.

Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

Although students had been placed in the repeat English 9 course for a variety of reasons, almost all responded favorably to the redesigned curriculum. In essence, the vast majority of English 9 students and their second semester English teachers concurred that they had indeed acquired both the motivation and literacy skills necessary to succeed in the academic school environment. An examination of recent research yields additional support for a literature-based reading/writing curriculum.

Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) identified ten commonalities, some overt, some subtle, in their review of literature based reading programs. In one way or another, these ten were identifiable in the redesigned English 9 curriculum: premises learned from "natural readers," use of natural text, neurological impress method, reading aloud, sustained silent reading, teacher modeling, emphasis on changing attitudes, self selection of reading materials, meaning oriented with skills often taught in meaningful context, and process writing and other output activities (pp. 474-476).

Several thematic articles in a recent English Journal identified additional characteristics of approaches that successfully engage students in literate activities. Survey results from 175 middle-

school students yielded five factors that figured most prominently in creating avid readers. Many became apparent near the end of the English 9 semester: 1) reading is social, 2) reading fosters independence to create your own world, 3) being able to read more and better than others is personally gratifying, 4) role models provide motivation, and 5) "adventure" is often cited as reading's appeal (Martin, 1991, p. 50). Although many English 9 students could not be classified as avid readers, they had taken significant steps toward permanent membership in the "literacy club" (Smith, 1988).

Literate behavior does not develop overnight. In a search for tenets to guide instruction Lesesne (1991) discovered five themes that consistently emerged in fifty years of research into the formation of literate behavior: 1) Lifetime readers are made, not born. 2) Children and young adults need role models to emulate. 3) Children and young adults need time in school to read for pleasure. 4) Free reading can be used to develop lifetime readers. 5) A curriculum rich in response will aid the development of lifetime readers (pp. 61-63).

Moffett and Wagner (1991) described additional student-centered reading activities designed to foster reading maturity and involvement in literature. Four in particular were successfully utilized in the redesigned English curriculum: dramatizing and performing texts, listening to and watching performed texts, transforming texts, and discussing reading. Although the suggestions offered by Martin, Lesesne, Moffett and Wagner were not published until a year after the 1990-91 English 9 experience, we were indeed gratified to learn that so much of what we had attempted has been validated by others. In

addition, this quote - also discovered this Fall - seemed particularly germane as we all continue to address the needs of at-risk learners.

> If you treat individuals as they are, they will stay as they are, but if you treat them as if they were what they ought to be and could be, they will become what they ought to be and could be.
>
> Johann von Goethe

References

Allington, R.L. (1991). The legacy of "slow it down and make it more concrete." (pp. 19-29). In J. Zutell, S. McCormick, L. Caton, and P. O'Keefe (Eds.), Fortieth Yearbook of The National Reading Conference. Chicago: The National Reading Conference, Inc.

Atwell, N. (1987). In the middle. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Beach, R. and Hynds, S. (1991). Research on response to literature. (pp. 453-489). In R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, and P.D. Pearson (Eds.), Handbook of Reading Research (Vol. II) New York: Longman.

Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. (1982). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston, Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Commeyras, M. (1989). Using literature to teach critical thinking. Journal of Reading, 32(8), 703-707.

Connelly, F.M. and Clandinin, D.J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. Educational Researcher, 19(5), 2-14.

Duffy, G, and Barnes, H. (1991). Practioner-scholar program for university and K-12 educational leaders. Unpublished manuscript, Michigan State University, Michigan Partnership for New Education, East Lansing, MI.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching (pp. 119-161). New York: Macmillan.

Fader, D., Duggins, J., Finn, T., and McNeil, E. (1976). The new hooked on books. New York: Berkeley.

Farnan, N. (1989). Critical reading and writing through a reader response approach. Writing Teacher, 2(5), 36-38.

Gambrell, L.B. (Ed.). (1990). Learners at risk [Special issue]. Journal of Reading, 33(7).

Goswami, D. and Stillman, P.R. (1987). Reclaiming the classroom:

Teacher research as an agency for change. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.

Holmes Group. (1990). Tomorrow's schools: Principles for the design of professional development schools. East Lansing, MI: Author.

Kreisberg, D. (1989). Getting started in literature: Making the connections. Writing Teacher, 2(5), 10-15.

Leesne, T.S. (1991). Developing lifetime readers: Suggestions from fifty years of research. English Journal, 80(6), 61-64.

Lomax, P. (1989). The management of change: Increasing school effectiveness through action research. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters LTD.

Martin, P. (1991). Reader/leaders: Exploring the why. English Journal, 80(6), 47-53.

Merrian, S.B. (1988). Case study research in education: A qualitative approach. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Moffett, J. and Wagner, B.J. (1991). Student-centered reading activities. English Journal, 80(6), 70-73.

Perrone, V. (1991). A letter to teachers: Reflections on schooling and the art of teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Slavin, R., Karweit, N., and Madden, N. (1989). Effective programs for students at risk. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Smith, F. (1988). Understanding reading (4th ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Smith, J.A. and Bowers, J.S. (1989). Approaches to using literature for teaching reading. Reading Improvement, 26(4), 345-348.

Tunnell, M.O. and Jacobs, J.S. (1989). Using "real" books: Research findings on literature based reading instruction. Reading Teacher, 42(7), 470-477.

APPENDIX A
PROFILES OF ENGLISH 9 STUDENTS

Micky was a bright student, although he could have cared less whether or not he turned in any work during his experiences in 9th grade at the junior high. He commanded a lot of attention from his peers in the repeat English 9 class. He could speak and people listened. Micky brought some thought-provoking issues to the discussion platform and he certainly had his opinions. Sometimes he would complain about the work if he did not think it had any application to reality. He loved to read, and tackled some pretty complex problems. Despite his "apparent" confidence, he was definitely insecure about his writing skills. He could see flaws and that made him impatient with himself.

Short Stuff had high level skills but low application levels. Lack of follow-through caused his return to English 9. His big, showy behavior in class had to be an attempt to make up for his self-perceived small, "unmacho" stature. After he was recognized for his outstanding reading and writing skills, some of that compensating behavior dwindled. He was a "ham" and interpretive reading was his gift. So were the creative projects and he became the one with which to work collaboratively. He was very interested in reading and found a "buddy" in class who had the same reading interests. Consequently, he came to enjoy the time he spent in English 9.

Sonny was extremely difficult to get to know because he was so quiet. He had tried but failed academically in earlier years resulting in extremely low self-confidence. Getting him to speak above a whisper was quite a challenge. Although he worked cooperatively in groups and did talk with others in that setting, when working independently Sonny was right back to being his quiet, shy self.

Jake had some serious reading problems that he managed to hide for a long time. He always carried a huge novel for SSR time, but was usually disruptive during that quiet reading period. He as also a poor writer; sounding out words to spell was extremely difficult for him. He finally confessed, with great dread, that he doesn't understand anything he reads not only in English class but in any class that requires textbook reading. At year's end he had quite a depressed, give-it-up attitude. Although he worked well in groups, he rarely turned in individual assignments.

Lenny was a joy to watch "bloom." He was a loner because he really perceived himself as being above the "stupid" behavior he noticed and looked down upon in class. He would rather read to himself at ALL times, whether or not his attention was required for in-class activities. Early in the semester Lenny did not care enough about work to turn anything in. Fortunately, by semester's end he produced some quality things. He was one of four students who turned in a research project for the first time in several academic years. His comments were usually quite humorous and well-conceived, although at times, unkind. By the end of the semester, he actually cared enough to smile and say "good morning."

Brandy was as good-natured as kids come. His skills were somewhat low, but his lack of motivation for completing tasks was the real reason for repeating the class. He was socially accepted and regularly completed work in class. However, any outside work was an effort for him. Group projects were fun for Brandy and he made the most of them. Finally, he did complete an independent novel and wrote a report on it. This was his first completed outside-class project in two years.

Chip was a quiet, collected type of guy. He did not socialize very well and seemed to have a chip on his shoulder due to being in the repeat English 9 class. Apparently he did not get along at all with his ninth grade teacher, so by not doing the necessary things to pass, he failed. He liked to read, but did not want to contribute much to the class - he was usually in his own element. He did complete assignments but they were usually late.

Kelli moved to this school district from a district in rural Georgia. In her previous English classes she said they did no reading, only sentence writing, word analysis, and parts of speech. She was thrilled to read novels, especially orally so that she could hear how the expression enhanced the reading and meaning. Kelli had very poor writing skills, but she stuck to her tasks, tried very hard, followed through on a research topic, and really felt she learned from this class. When in groups, Kelli contributed a lot, even though she was somewhat shy. She seemed to enjoy working with others.

APPENDIX B
MAY 1991 FOLLOW-UP STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

"I am re-evaluating the English 9 course here at the high school and your honest input will help me a lot. This will be audio taped but no one besides me, Ms. Rafferty and the transcriber will hear these tapes."

1. Recall your English 9 experience at the junior high. Why do you think you needed to repeat the class last fall at the high school?

2. When you walked into room 210 last fall, what did you expect from the English 9 repeat class?

3. What types of class work and assignments do you think you needed in order to succeed in English? (Consider: When you think of English what does that mean to you?) Which (of those things) did you get? Why/Why not?

4. Which assignments/projects did you gain the most from (list specifically as a prompt) gain, meaning from, or find value in?

5. Why were those assignments/projects mentioned above interesting or "worth something" to you?

6. Finish this statement: I think the English 9 class at the high school helped prepare me for further study in the English 10 class in the following ways: (these ways do not have to be just academic).

7. Has how you feel about English or school changed since you started at high school this fall? In what ways? (PROBE: How about your reactions to SSR? Writing - Journals, longer papers, creative writings? Doing projects in groups?)

8. What was it about the English 9 class that allowed some of these changes to happen?

9. Now that you are in one of the English 10 classes, what do you feel you are successful with? doing well in...? happy doing...? need to improve in...?

APPENDIX C
MAY 1991 ENGLISH 10/COMMUNICATION SKILLS TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

"The basic purpose of this interview is to try to find out how the English 9 students are doing in Communication Skills or English 10. I'd like for you to try to paint a portrait of how the students behave, act, and function so that we can compare your perceptions with our observations and the students' own perceptions of how English 9 prepared them for second semester."

1. What is the purpose/focus of English 10/Communication Skills? What types of projects, assignments, expectations, etc.?

2. How are the English 9 students doing?
   -Behavior appropriate?
   -Fitting in?
   -Completing assignments?
   -Working in groups cooperatively/productively?
   -Participating in discussions or Q/A sessions?

3. What are their skills like? (Strengths and Weaknesses)
   -Reading
   -Writing (Grammar, punctuation, clarity, cohesiveness, etc.)
   -Other communication arts?

4. What are their attitudes toward:
   -Homework
   -Use of class time
   -Types of assignments given
   -Reading
   -Writing (and other Communication Arts)
   -English 10 or Communication Skills class
   -School in general

5. What is their work ethic like?
   -Do you have to monitor them closely or do they self-monitor?
   -Do they have a sense of pride in their work?
   -Do they regularly complete tasks?
   -Is quality important to them?

6. Why do you think these students were in English 9 at the high school?

7. If you hadn't known that they had to repeat English 9, would you have been able to tell? Why/why not?